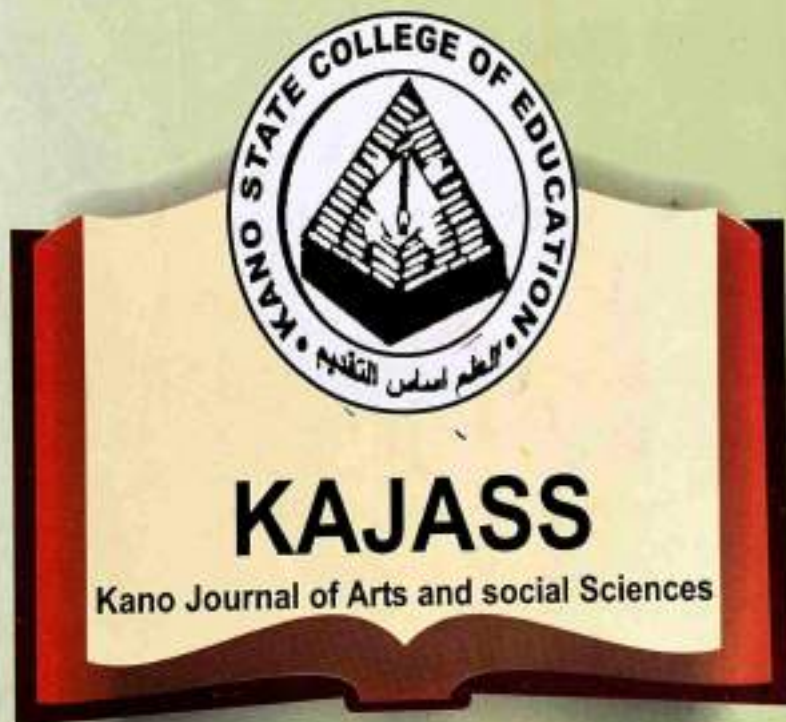


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LANGUAGE AND ETHNIC POLITICS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Language, a foremost tool in the communication of information and idea is a potent factor in the determination of the general outlook of a people. To that extent, it could be argued that the bulk of what makes up the culture of a people lies in its language. A typical traditional society like Nigeria, made up of multiethnic and multilingual communities lumped together has seen every issue become items of contention along ethno-linguistic divide. In this, language has merely acted as centrifugal force often rubbing known cordialities that exists among ethnic communities. This paper takes a detailed look at such trends and recommend ways through which language could become a centripetal factor, capable of improving interethnic relationships in Nigeria.

Introduction

Of all the countries in the world today, writes Mundt and Aporisade (2005-691), Nigeria might be the only one whose continued existence is currently in doubt. The country's ethno-linguistic, regional and religious division have intensified in recent times. Policies aimed at achieving unity and national integration have failed woefully and important political actors are recently asking that the country is broken up into a weak federation or even completely independent states if political power cannot be distributed in a manner all can accept.

As a result of the geographical separation of ethnic groups, Nigerians can be easily identified based on language and cultural traits. Nigerian ethnic groups vary tremendously in size and only three – the Hausa, the Yoruba and the Igbo are particularly numerous and influential in the country's politics. The influence of these three major groups is a cause of great concern to the remaining minority groups. Since there is a high degree of geographical separation of ethnic groups in Nigeria, Nigerians can easily identify the origin of their fellow citizens by observing their dialects for ascent in English, their manner of dress if it is traditional and in some cases by "tribal marks" patterned facial scars that formally were created as part of rites of passage to indicate ethnic identity. There are also differences in wealth and political awareness.

In the absence of widely accepted figures, the size of Nigerian ethnic groups can only be approximated. Approximately, one half of the country's population is in the north and about one fourth each in the southeast and southwest. The Hausa represents about two thirds of the north's total population; the Igbo about two third in the east and the Yoruba about two third in the west. Thus, other groups represent about one third in each region and one third overall (Ibid)

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Given the above structural scenario, it became obvious that Nigeria, a typical third world state will battle so much instability. Among Nigerians, ethnicity is very closely associated with a strong belief in a perceived cultural and linguistic diversity of the country (Nnoli 1980:107). This has made the competition among the three majority languages within a single polity breed constant internal tension and ethnic disunity (Agbedo 2007: 13).

Despite the seemingly popular sentiment that Nigerian state is failing as a result of its accommodation of diverse and complex linguistic groups within its fold, additional suggestions abound in explaining this negative national character. Primitive tribal sentiments and also bad politics have all been adduced as reasons for Nigeria's dismal performance as a modern state. However, Onwuejeogwu (1987:2) cited in Agbedo (Ibid 87) has a different view point. According to him, a full appreciation of the dynamics of Nigeria's modern linguistic needs for socio-cultural and politico-economic integration is mandatory. He argues, compared to Nigeria, Russia has about 27 ethnic groups, China and India about 40 each, the USA less than 50, United Kingdom 3, France 8 and Germany 15. Of all the mega states in the world, only Nigeria has 300 ethnic groups. This uncommon situation creates unique problems hitherto unknown to the experience of other peoples in the world. For Onwuejeogwu, no Western or Eastern civilization has ever evolved a political system that can cope with these gigantic problems of hyper-ethnic instability syndrome.

This paper will first and foremost clearly operationalise the three key concepts arising from its title. It will then look at language and culture as the make up of ethnicity and the nature of ethnic politics in Nigeria. The paper will then be concluded with well throughout recommendations.

Conceptual Clarification

Language

According to Greenberg (1971:156), language is the prerequisite for the accumulation and transmission of other cultural traits. Such fundamental aspects of culture as organized political life, legal systems, religion and science are inconceivable without that most basic of human tools, a linguistic system of communication. For Gardinor (1978) in the traffic of daily life, situations are constantly arising so closely similar that we do not hesitate to speak of them as the same situation. Every language has its own fixed ways of coping with certain recurring situations. The relationship the user has with his audience is the situational factor that is involved in tenor of discourse. Tenors of discourse result from the mutual relationship between the language used and the relationships among the participants in language events.

For Agbedo (2003:3) the basic features of language has proposed a set of design features which all human languages display. These include cultural transmission. Again language could mean a system for making meanings; a semantic system with other

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For Agbedo (2003:3) the basic features of language has proposed a set of design features which all human languages display. These include cultural transmission. Again language could mean a system for making meanings; a semantic system with other

systems for encoding the meanings it produces. When we study human language, we are approaching what some might call the human essence, the distinctive qualities of mind that are so far as we know unique to man (Franklin et al 1983). The logic extension is whatever else people may do when they come together – whether they pray, fight, politics – they talk. We live in the world of words. The point is when you know a language; you can speak and be understood by others who know that language. This is the essence of Nigerian politics that is basically played along ethnic line. As socio-political organization, conflict, competition and cooperation are inevitable. As such, language has its own role to play in attempting to influence the outcome of events. In most African countries, language play sensitive roles in achieving certain objectives.

Politics

The definition of politics is highly, perhaps essentially contested. There is considerable disagreement on which aspects of social life are to be considered political (Allison 2003:422). This must have informed Rowe's submission that politics is a widespread activity.

When in his famous work "politics" Aristotle observed that man is by nature a political animal, he actually was implying that the essence of social existence is politics and that two or more men interacting with one another are invariably involved in a political relationship. Aristotle also argued that more people prefer a life of social companionship to one of isolationism. Therefore, when men struggle for scarce resources, try to define their positions in the society or try to convince others to accept their points of view, they are clearly engaged in politics. According to Aristotle, it is only through political interaction with others in an institutionalized setting that one's individual capabilities could be maximized and such a setting is the state (Baker 1962:1).

Since Aristotle's attempt at defining politics, the subject has been numerously defined by scores of scholars. While Max Weber, a classicalist political scientist, conceived politics as the operation of the state and its institutions (Anifowose 1999:2) another classicalist De'Grazia (1965) defines politics as events that happens around the decision-making centers of government. While Ernest Baker, a behaviouralist, conceived politics as the activities – negotiation, argument, discussion, application of force and persuasion among others by which an issue is agitated or settled (Baker op.cit 14). Lasswell (1930:17) sees politics as the study of who gets what, when and how. For Easton (1971:129) politics is the authoritative allocation of values in a cooperative or conflictual setting for a society.

An important observation here is the perceptual differences between the classicalist and the behaviouralist scholars. While the classicalists erroneously restricted what could be termed the political to institutions and government, the behaviouralists expended so much energy discussing the ambiguous concepts of power, authority and conflict.

A lifeline came the way of politics when William Bluhm defined it as a social process characterized by activity involving rivalry and cooperation in the exercise of power and culminating in the making of decision for a group (Bluhm 1965:21). This definition which incorporated the ideas of the classicalists and the behaviouralists emphasized politics rather than government. With such definition as Bluhm's, the political scientist can legitimately study the politics of a labour union, corporation, religious organization, village union, extended family and interethnic relations.

Thus, while it could be argued that there is no best definition of politics, most political scientists agree that politics has something to do with the struggle to exercise power, command authority, assert influence, resolve conflict, negotiate positions all aimed at satisfying individual and/or collective interests (Anifowose op.cit:3).

Ethnicity

For Allison (2003:177) the only working general definition of ethnicity is that it involves the common consciousness of shared origins and traditions. Ethnicity is the quality of belonging to an ethnic group. The question of what an ethnic group is has no universal acceptability. Even at that, Nnoli (1980:5) has submitted an all embracing definition when he observed that ethnicity is a social phenomenon associated with interaction among members of different ethnic groups. Ethnic groups are social formations distinguished by communal character of their boundaries. The relevant communal factors may be language, culture or both. In Africa, language has clearly been the most crucial variable (Ibid:5). As social formations, ethnic groups are not necessarily homogenous entities even linguistically and culturally. Minor linguistic and cultural differences often do exist within the group forming the bases for the delineation of sub-ethnic systems.

Ethnicity and tribalism are not the same. While tribalism occupy an important place in the racist ideology of colonialism, ethnicity is a more universal concept for understanding the phenomenon which colonial racism called tribalism (Nnoli op.cit: 5). Ethnicity is more scientific than tribalism. It is not limited in space and this forces it to act as an abstract mental construct whose characteristics can be more objectively determined. The concept of ethnic group has a greater explanatory power than the concept of tribe.

For improved understanding of this concept, Nnoli further distinguished it from ethnocentrism. While ethnocentrism is attitudinal in form and perceptual in content representing the subjective dimension of ethnic behaviour, ethnicity includes all these attitudes but go beyond them. Ethnicity is behavioural in form and conflictual in content. Some of the attributes of ethnicity that are accommodated in ethnocentrism includes: First, ethnicity exists only within a political society consisting of diverse ethnic groups; Second, much more than ethnocentrism, ethnicity is characterized by common consciousness of being one in relation to other relevant ethnic groups (Heater 1964:31); Third, exclusiveness is an attribute of ethnicity. Here, acceptance or rejection of an

individual or a group on linguistic – cultural grounds characterize social relation. These are expressed inevitably through interethnic discrimination; Fourth, conflict is an important aspect of ethnicity. This is inevitable under conditions of interethnic competition for scarce valuable resources particularly in societies where inequality is accepted as natural and wealth is greatly esteemed: It is a very important observation as well that ethnicity does not exist in pure form. This is because it is always closely associated with political, judicial, religious and other social views which constitute important ingredients as well.

Objective of the Research

This paper, basically, aimed at investigating the following objectives and systematically reporting findings.

1. The extent of ethnic politics and accompanying inter-ethnic tension resulting from a multiplicity, diverse and complex linguistic formation.
2. Conducting a critical analysis of language, ethnicity and politics in order to identify the intensity of the correlation among them.
3. Determining ways of reducing ethnic politics and preventing particularistic interest which has continued to undermine national cohesion, consciousness and integration in Nigeria

Language, Ethnicity and Politics – A Logical Link

A strong and unbroken relationship exists between these tripartite concepts-language, ethnicity and politics. Language is a universal cultural constant just as addition and subtraction are universal mathematical constants. Language is an inseparable aspect of culture and together they both define ethnicity. It is for this that Olebara (2008:3) put forward the –No language No culture; No culture No identity idea. Language is the prerequisite for the accumulation and transmission of other cultural traits (Greenberg 1971:156). Such fundamental aspects of culture as organized political life, legal system, religion and science are unconceivable without that most basic of human tools-a linguistic system of communication. It is common heredity of a people and for this Olebara (Op.cit:3) has described it as the quickest litmus to identifying a people anywhere and at anytime. In Nigeria for instance, while Igbo is the language spoken by the Igbo ethnic group; Yoruba language is spoken by the Yoruba ethnic group and so it is with the Hausas and their Hausa language. About 300 other languages are spoken as mother-tongue of other Nigerian communities.

Language being the foremost social legacy of every community is the most cherished heritage which no ethnic group for any reason will be willing to give out. Any threat to a peoples' language is seen as a threat to the peoples' essence. Prescribing a given language for a multiethnic society implies that those who speak the "chosen" language will dominate others in the same environment. Problems associated with ethnicity easily arise where there is diversity in language spoken by the people. In this, Nigeria and most other African countries are outstanding examples.

By its very nature, politics is essentially about struggle for power with a view to authoritatively exercise control over the allocation of values (Anifowose op.cit). From the views of Bluhm, Easton and Lasswell, we could decipher that politics entails agreement and disagreement, cooperation and conflict among groups in their quest to actualize group goals. The relationship between language, ethnicity and politics in a typical multi-lingual third world state like Nigeria is that ethnic affiliation becomes the highest level of political action and language remains as observed by Okebara the quickest litmus for communicating this ethno-political action. Unfortunately, as a result of excruciating poverty resulting from poorly developed and badly managed socio-economic and political institutions, interethnic struggle for wealth and power become intense. Thus, Lloyd (1970:1-13) has observed that Nigeria's problem do derive in large measure from the tensions which have arisen between the larger ethnic groups and that the hostility derives not from ethnic differences, but from competition between people for wealth and power. The basis for this assertion can be located within the turn of events in the relationship among the various ethnic groups as colonialism gradually ground to a halt in Nigeria.

The Cradle of Ethnic Politics in Nigeria

Language especially the mother-tongue has played far reaching roles in Nigeria's ethnic politics. This is seen in the manner in which it has aided the communication, albeit brashly, of the collective socio-economic and political desires of the various ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. At the centre of ethnic politics in Nigeria is the quest for wealth and power by the emerging Nigerian elite class. The understanding here is that ethnic politics in Nigeria is more of a colonial rather than a pre-colonial formation.

According to Nnoli (1980:35) the colonial urban setting constitute the cradle of contemporary ethnicity in Nigeria. It was there that what we refer to as ethnic groups today first acquired consciousness. Research has shown that ethnicity in Nigeria is a creation of the colonial and post colonial order. For example, it was only after colonization that the term Yoruba land began to be used to refer to the domains of all rulers who claim descent from the mythical Oduduwa instead of the kingdom of Oyo to which it was previously limited. Similarly, the Igbo, organized into separate and autonomous political societies conterminous with the village began during the colonial and post colonial era to create groups with a corresponding consciousness and cohesion. Elsewhere among the Hausa-Fulani, a mystical trace to Bayajidda was made. Other smaller ethnic groups in Nigeria such as the Bini, the Kanuri and the Mumuye among others have similar mythical trace to their various origin.

The colonial and urban origin of ethnicity becomes clear when it is recalled that the phenomenon cannot exist unless individual from different communal groups are in contact. Ethnicity being a social but not a biological phenomenon requires such contacts to emerge. This view is represented by a number of scholars including Depres (1975:5) when he argued that the origin and persistence of ethnic boundaries, the incorporation

of ethnic populations and the organization of interethnic relations are generally related to factors affecting the competition for environmental resources.

It is essentially in the urban areas that extensive and significant contacts take place between members of the different pre-colonial polities and diverse linguistic and cultural formations. The rural-rural migration that took place during the pre-colonial and colonial era in Nigeria is insignificant in explaining ethnicity. This is because, in most cases, the migrant population relative to their host community is quite small to cause any ethnic tension. However, when as in areas such as Okonyong near Calabar and Umudioga near Ahoada the migrant population is numerically significant, ethnicity tends to emerge and persist.

The significant level of contact for the emergence of contemporary ethnicity took place in the colonial urban areas. Such inter communal contact is reflected in the linguistic groups composition of some Nigerian urban centers. Urban migration in Nigeria was significant from the colonial era. The Nigerian population census of 1952 made some startling revelations. It shows, for instance, that while an indigenous Yoruba town of Lagos had 26.7% its population as immigrants, the Igbo town of Onitsha had 14.0% of its total population as immigrants while the Hausa towns of Kano and Zaria had immigrant populations of 22.5% and 23.5% respectively. More startling is the figure posted from Jos and Minna showing that the indigenous Birom and Gwari population were less than 1% and 2% respectively. The above reduced to insignificance an average rural migration of about 1% over the same period in Nigeria.

It is important in explaining ethnicity that the contact situation of the diverse communal groups is clearly understood. This is because it is in such situation that ethnocentrism leads to ethnicity. The crucial question for analysis at this point becomes why is it that often, when these groups are in a contact situation, ethnicity develops? For this question, an examination of the factors which define the Nigerian urban situation becomes imperative. Nnoli (Op.cit:4) identifies some of the factors which explain Nigerian urban setting and its relationship to ethnicity as follows (a) Its colonial origin (b) the patterns of migration to it (c) the colonial heritage of the advanced capitalist societies, status as a dependent and peripheral appendage of the advanced capitalist societies, (d) its participation and inferior role in an imposed international division of labour (e) socio-economic competition (f) inegalitarianism in socio-economic life (g) social atomization of the population and (h) the pervasive socio-economic insecurity of the individual among others. Analysis that excludes these factors mystifies rather than clarify Nigeria's ethnic problem (Nnoli Ibid). The above reduced to insignificance an average rural migration of about 1% over the same period in Nigeria.

The Character of Inter Ethnic Relationship in Nigeria

The 1930s the years of the depression and the Second World War constitute the gestation period of ethnic identity and, therefore, the birth period of contemporary ethnic politics in Nigeria. As the British colonialists developed roads, railways, postal communication and other media communication, individuals from one linguistic groups

could more easily migrate to another. Initially, the socio-economic competition between the migrants and their host was not sharp, consequently, the latter did not feel threatened by the activities of the former and very little hostility existed between the groups. As observed by Sofola (1970:115-131) interactions between ethnic groups were so positive that inter-group marriages were fairly common. However, when migrants became many and socio-economic competition with the host became more intense, relations were strained. In reaction, both migrants and their hosts organized themselves along communal lines in order to safeguard their interests in the struggle for the scarce and unequally distributed resources.

During this period, kinship and communal union sprang up in the main urban centers of Nigeria. According to Coleman (1958:343) the formation in 1942 of the Yoruba language society coupled with some other Yoruba ethnic unions prior to this paralleled a similar development among the Igbo.

The elite class of one Nigeria's ethnic group often times, found it easy and convenient to blame their plight on advantages possessed by member of other groups. Once the members of a particular group gained access to the best jobs and other resources, they used their positions to find jobs for others or at least pass on news of job opportunities to them (Nnoli Op.cit:98). The repercussions were felt in unequal levels of unemployment and income as well as in different degrees of social status among the communal groups. Attempt by each group to escape the negative consequences of this phenomenon led to further strengthening of communal association and invariably the heightening of hostilities.

By 1940, writes Oyediran (1979:7) virtually all important institutions of the land have been politicized along ethnic line. The political, socio-economic, judiciary and even religion have been inflicted by ethnicity. It is this plague that was incubated during the colonial era that still haunts Nigeria till today. Between 1941 and 1950 Oyediran (Ibid) the unhealthy rivalry between the Igbo and the Yoruba was intensified. It was not limited to the political scene, it extended to almost every area in which the two groups met. By 1948, Azikiwe had ceased to be Zik of Africa but Zik of the Igbo nation and soon, Awolowo emerged as champion of Yoruba nationalism first through the Egbe Omo Oduduwa and soon after as the leader of the Action Group Political Party. The northern part of the federation was brought into national ethnic politics through the processes following the drawing up of the Macpherson constitution. During the General Conference at Ibadan aimed at addressing certain fundamental questions that bothers on the structure of the federation, sharp north-south disagreement arose on some of the issues. It was that bad that the Emirs of Zaria and Kastina threatened that unless the north was ceded half the seats in the proposed House of Representatives, they would seek separation from the rest of Nigeria on the arrangements before 1914. The Northern delegation won on the issue of representation at the centre and the demand to redraw the boundaries between regions. As noted by Kirk-Green (1971:15). The

decision to allow the north's claim was one that was to dominate the shaping of Nigeria's political culture until the first republic exploded sixteen years later.

Thus, ethnicity which was sparked off by predominantly colonial conditions initially centered around the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. However, over the years and right into the post-colonial era, it has gradually but steadily expanded to engulf virtually all of the over 300 linguistic groups within.

Language and Ethnic Politics in Nigeria

Language has continued to play a far reaching role in Nigeria's ethnic politics. Odebara has earlier informed us that "No language No culture and No culture No ethnic group." It is language that conveys the general outlook of any ethnic group. Since language unequivocally defines an ethnic group and is also a major instrument in interethnic cooperation and competition, the clamour in some quarters to create a national language or national languages for Nigeria has become a major issue in ethnic politics.

Agbede (2007:86) observes that the rise in ethnic consciousness following the failure of the 1993 elections under the military regimes of Generals Babangida and Abacha has contributed to the negative perception of the Nigerian State (especially among the Yoruba people) and are likely to impact on the reception of and/or attitudes toward the policy of learning another Nigerian major language(s) (that is Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba). Agbede cites the ugly incidence of the botched attempts of some Yoruba youth organization to set fire on Ray Power Radio station in Lagos for broadcasting in Hausa language during the 1993 crises resulting from the annulment of the June 12 presidential elections widely believed to have been won by Chief M.K.O Abiola a Yoruba man. By implication, a seemingly latent Yoruba ethnic politics was being fired by the political crises and this politics was what the youth organization tries to express by the rejection of the use of Hausa as a language of broadcast in a Yoruba territory. This scenario goes to support the assertion by Okafor (1985) cited in Agbede (opcit:88) that for Nigeria, language is not necessarily a prerequisite for inter ethnic cooperation but for conflict. By the very nature of the Nigerian State, any policy that confers "national or official" status to any single Nigerian language is bound to be seriously resisted. The choice of Hausa which allegedly has the largest number and widest spread of speakers for example as the national language will be readily construed as an attempt to establish the political hegemony of the north over the south.

Also, it was the rise in ethnic consciousness arising from massive migration of the Igbo speaking people to other parts of Nigeria and the rising tension between them and their hosts that often expose them to violent attack by their host communities. Such attacks on N'digbo resident in the northern parts of Nigeria by the Hausa-Fulani ethno-linguistic stock in 1966 precipitated the secession bid of N'digbo and culminated in the Nigeria civil war between 1967 and 1970, during which thousands of N'digbo were exterminated (Amadiokoro 1997:12). Till today, N'digbo are still haunted species in Nigeria for daring to wage a war against their fatherland, hence their strident cries against acts of

marginalization, victimization and other forms of ill treatment by successive governments. According to Nwadike (2006:1) cited in Agbedo (2007:95) the Igbo ethno – linguistic group was endangered when the Nigeria military had wanted to wipe it through a pogrom from 1966-1970. The well articulated agenda for the massacre of N'digbo in 1966 as contained in the report of the justice G.C.M Onyiuke tribunal speaks for itself.

- During periods of civil insurgency in Nigerian cities, immigrants who can fluently speak the language of their hosts stand better chance to safety than those who cannot express themselves in host languages. This has been amply demonstrated over time. For instance reference may be made to the Nigeria civil war of 1967-1970 and the Kano riot of 1965 (Muhammadu and Mohammed 1979:27). Also more recently , we have witnessed several inter ethnic insurgences including the Hausa-Yoruba clash in Kano and Sagamu respectively in 1999, the attack on Igbo in Borno in 2000 and a reprisal attack on Hausa –Fulani and Kanuri in Igbo cities of Onitsha, Aba and Umuahia during the same period. Today, so much ethnic killings is going on between the Hausa-Fulani and the Birom of Jos Plateau.

In the present day Nigeria, therefore, language remains the central plank to ethnic politics (Harris 1979:71-73). It permeates every department of Nigeria's social life. It is felt in party politics, in the legislature; in the court; the administrative units, in the allocation of resources and sitting of projects, at the federal, the state and local government levels. Ethnic politics may not necessarily equate with ethnic killings but the lots of scheming, agitation and back-biting it creates among ethnic groups often times escalate to violent conflicts among contending ethnic groups. The role of language in reinforcing inters ethnic politics, therefore, remains very strong.

Conclusion

Given the complex nature of the Nigerian state, one would not expect a politically stable system. Onwuejeogwu has told us that no Western or Eastern civilization has ever evolved a political system that can cope with this gigantic problems of hyper-ethnic instability syndrome. Nigeria has over 300 ethno-linguistic groups, her material and non material culture are diverse, her economy and infrastructure are mismanaged and her leadership has remained corrupt. All these, added to a multiplicity of languages can never engender national cohesion and national integration. Given the level of ethnic consciousness pervading the Nigerian state today the adoption of one or a couple of the numerous mother-tongues as the nation's official language may become the easiest route to total disintegration and dismemberment of the country.

Recommendation

In the light of the above discussions, this paper recommend as follows:- That even if the multilingual nature of the Nigerian State has continued to reinforce ethnic hostilities in her politics, the search for and adoption of a national language or languages cannot provide a positive alternative. Indeed, the only guarantee to national integration is a

combined psychological sense of objective and subjective variables deeply entrenched in the population. It is for this that Onwuejeogwu cited in Agbedo (2007:87) advised that Nigeria must look inward for solutions to her well known national problems, many of which are linguistic in origin.

All the official and unofficial policies being channeled towards adopting a national language for Nigeria such as contained in the NPE, OT or even the WAZOBIA policy trust should not only be outrightly abandoned but also be collapsed into policies that should elicit economic and infrastructural development. When this is achieved, it will become enough discouragement to proliferating ethno-linguistic unions and youth militia groups masquerading, albeit, violently as protectors of the interest of their various ethno-linguistic groups.

A society like Nigeria plagued by ethnic and language politics should see accelerated route to development through charismatic leadership but not inter-ethnic struggle for power and resources. Followers should have implicit faith in the extraordinary qualities which their national leaders possess and without sentiment follow them willingly. Instances of such charismatic personalities are Vladimir Lenin of Russia, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Nelson Mandela of the Republic of South Africa among others. Even in Nigeria, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Sir. Ahmadu Bello and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe were all charismatic leaders.

Good governance devoid of corruption, sectionalism, tribalism and other attitudinal vices of the Nigerian public officers will form a great antidote against language and ethnic hostilities. When Nigerian political leaders learn to treat their followers fairly and equitably, when governance and its dividends are delivered to Nigerians equitably from the standpoint of Nigerian citizens rather than from the standpoint of ethno-linguistic divide, then undue ethnic advantage often enjoyed, albeit, momentarily by any ethnic group in power over others will cease to be. This will also correspondingly drop the level of group ethno-linguistic solidarity and inter-ethnic hostilities arising from group quest to amass more than a fair share of the national cake.

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